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ABSTRACT

Standards for the accreditation of training programs in school psychology have been developed by several organizations including the American Psychological Association which provides accreditation criteria for professional psychology programs, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) which develops criteria generic to advanced programs for the preparation of professional school personnel including school psychologists, and the National Association of School Psychologists which has standards specific to school psychology programs. Differences within these standards, however, complicate the process of accreditation for programs seeking multiple accreditation. Such disparities prevent constructive collaboration within the profession in regard to training issues. The Scientific Problem Solver Model represents a training approach compatible with both the generic and specific criteria of the several associations accrediting school psychology training programs. The operationalization of one specific training program to reflect this perspective is presented as well as how this training program conforms to the criteria of the major accrediting associations and how it is applicable at both the masters and doctoral level. (Author)

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Operationalizing the Scientific Problem Solver Model for Program Accreditation[1]

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Operationalizing the Scientific Problem Solver Model for Program Accreditation

Standards for the accreditation of training programs in professional school psychology have been developed by several organizations. Presently, the American Psychological Association (APA), under the aegis of COPA (Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation) provides accreditation criteria for professional psychology training programs at the doctoral level in the areas of clinical, counseling, and school psychology (APA, 1979). These standards are generic in nature. Further, APA (Division 16) currently is preparing standards specific to providers of school psychological services which will address issues of practice in the school setting more directly (APA, Note 1). The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), as a constitutent member of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which, in turn, is a member of COPA, in 1978 prepared specialty standards for both masters and doctoral level training programs in school psychology (Brantley & Brown, 1978). These specialty standards are part of the more generic standards of NCATE for the preparation of professional school personnel including school psychologists. NCATE, like APA, accredits programs under the aegis of COPA.

Program accreditation by national associations assures the quality of the professional psychology training program and its graduates to the consumer whether the consumer is the prospective graduate student or the public. Accreditation by APA remains an elective process sought by programs at their own discretion. At present, 15 of approximately 76 doctoral school psychology programs are APA accredited (Brown & Lindstrom, 1977). However, accreditation

by NCATE, using both its generic standards and the NASP-developed specialty standards, is a mandatory process for all training programs in schools of education in those states which subscribe to NCATE Standards. Programs wishing to assure their quality at both the masters and doctoral levels can do so only through NCATE. Masters level programs seeking accreditation can apply only to NCATE since APA's standards apply specifically to doctoral level training. Jurisdiction and differences within these two sets of standards, however, complicate the process of accreditation for programs seeking multiple accreditation. Currently, a national commission representing APA (Division 16) and NASP is addressing several issues of training especially accreditation jurisdiction, title, and independent entry level into practice (Brown, 1979; Cardon, 1979). It appears, however, that resolution of these issues may take some time.

The Scientific Problem Solver (SPS) Model represents a training approach which is compatible with both the generic and specific criteria of the several organizations accrediting school psychology (Burke, Haworth, & Brantley, Note 2) The objective of this presentation is to illustrate the operationalization of one specific training program, namely, the School Psychology Training Program of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to reflect the Scientific Problem Solver perspective. As will be illustrated, adoption of this model allows the training program to conform to the standards of both accrediting associations.

The SPS Model, illustrated by Burke, et al. (Note 2) is comprised of several interrelating aspects: the Knowledge Base, the Training Core, the Scientific Method. Of most concern for the process of accreditation is the

Knowledge Base which consists of the relevant information, skills, and techniques learned both in the university and field setting. The Knowledge Base is acquired through university preparation in the training core composed of: Foundations, Research, Assessment, Intervention, Professional Development, and Externship/Internship. It is through specification of this Knowledge Base that the SPS provides the fundamental key to satisfaction of the multiple standards for accreditation. A comparison of these standards (Burke, et al., Note 2) reveals that APA and NASP do not agree on the specific amount of training required in psychology and education. APA requires substantial training in psychology with less emphasis given to training in education. For example, APA requires training in the foundation areas of the biological bases of behavior, the cognitive-affective bases of behavior, the social bases of behavior and individual differences. These reflect APA's emphasis on generic training considered necessary for practice as a professional psychologist. In contrast, NASP assumes a psychological and educational focus and subsumes psychoeducational training more specific to school psychology within their requirements. For example, NASP requires training in the organization and operation of the school, instructional and remedial techniques, and special education. In addition, the generic standards of NCATE require training in such areas as multicultural education and humanistic behavioral studies (NCATE, 1977).

There are, however, commonalities within the separate accreditation standards in terms of both generic and specific training. For example, both sets of standards require training in professional ethics, research design, methodology, statistics, assessment, intervention, consultation, and

organizational evaluation. In addition, both agencies require a year's internship experience through which the knowledge gained in both the psychological bases suggested by APA and NASP and the more educational bases suggested by NASP-NCATE may be integrated into practice. Indeed, it is this integration of psychology and education as applied in the school setting that is the essence of the specialty of school psychology as a unique field of applied professional psychology.

School psychology training through the Scientific Problem Solver Model at UNC-CH at both the masters and doctoral level, includes within its Training Core the essential aspects which underlie professional psychology and its unique application to educational settings. Table 1 highlights the degree

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Insert Table 1 about here

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of overlap and essential differences between masters and doctoral level training in one program that implements the SPS model (i.e., the School Psychology Program at UNC-CH). As is apparent, there are commonalities in training during the first two years for both masters and doctoral students, that partially satisfy the standards of both APA and NASP-NCATE. Knowledge and skills in assessment, intervention, research/evaluation, and professional development, which are essential to psychological practice in educational settings, reflect both a generic and specialty focus. For example, within the assessment sequence, both groups of students learn techniques of observation, interviewing, and nonbiased assessment. Doctoral students supplement this training with study in the generic foundation areas required by APA of individual differences, biological bases, social bases and cognitive/affective

bases of behavior.

The essential difference between doctoral and masters level training in the SPS model involves a broadening and deepening of knowledge and skills in training core areas: assessment, intervention, professional development and field experience for the doctoral student. Doctoral students broaden and deepen skills in assessment through coursework and field experience with personality assessment, using the traditional projective techniques. Knowledge and skills in school consultation methods and organizational techniques increase with additional coursework. Emphasis in research and evaluation, and professional development shifts, for the doctoral student, to a systems level, with an organizational and program development focus. In essence, there is a shift from the direct service approach to individuals, groups, and systems at the masters level, to one of indirect and facilitative service delivery focus at the doctoral level. These skills are presented within selected theoretical frameworks, such as learning, developmental, cognitive and phenomenological theories of behavior, allowing conceptualization of the Knowledge Base from various positions. Integration of these viewpoints into training is accomplished by the ongoing externship program at both the masters and doctoral levels.

In sum then, the operationalization of the Scientific Problem Solver Model for professional school psychology, as currently conceptualized by the School Psychology Training Program at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, embodies a training approach compatible with both the generic and specific criteria of APA and NASP-NCATE at both the masters and doctoral levels. Indeed, it is only through the combination of the essential elements of these separate training standards that a Knowledge Base appropriate to

the specialty of school psychology as a unique field of professional psychology is delineated. Incoporation of the Knowledge Bases of both psychology and education into professional school psychology training, as is illustrated in the SPS Model, assures the dual knowledge and skills necessary for specialized, professional preparation. The Scientific Problem Solver Model provides one system for integrating the dual knowledge bases with multiple training levels to meet the standards now existing for professional training.

Reference Notes

1. American Psychological Association. Standards for providers of school psychological services. (Draft #8). Unpublished manuscript, June, 1978.

2. Burke, J. P., Haworth, C. E., & Brantley, J. C. The scientific problem solver model: A resolution for professional controversies in school psychology. In press, 1979.

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Footnotes

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[1]Portions of this paper were presented in J. C. Brantley (Chair), Issues in training school psychologists: The scientific problem solving perspective. Symposium presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, New York, 1979.

Table 1

Scientific Problem Solver Model
Masters & Doctoral Course Sequence

Year	Assessment	Intervention	Research & Evaluation	Professional Development	Foundations	Externship/ Internship
I	Psychoeducational Assessment I Psychoeducational Assessment II	Behavioral Intervention I Behavioral Intervention II School Consultation Methods I	Logic of Inquiry (D) Statistics for Educational Research I Statistics for Educational Research II	Seminar in Professional School Psychology Practicum in School Psychology I	Seminar in Learning Disabilities	1 day per week
II	Psychoeducational Assessment III Psychoeducational Assessment IV	Behavioral Intervention III	Design & Analysis of Research Projects Research Apprenticeship (D) Master's Thesis (M)	Practicum in School Psychology II	The Educational Organization as a Social System (M)	2 days per week
III		School Consultation Methods II (D)	Evaluation (D) Doctoral Dissertation (D)	Seminar in School Psychology (D) Doctoral Practicum in School Psychology (D)	Individual Differences (D) Biological Bases (D) Social Bases (D) Cognitive Affective Bases (D)	2 days per week
IV	Internship - 5 days per week					

D = Required only of Doctoral Students M = Required only of Masters Students